Mentors Accelerating Beginning Teacher and Student Learning

Ellen Moir, *NTC Executive Director*

All students need and deserve excellent instruction. The New Teacher Center's primary goal is an effective teacher in every classroom in the nation. In part, this means accelerating the development of new teachers. We know that the newest members of the profession are often hired to teach in schools where students, often facing the challenges of poverty, urgently depend on excellent instruction. Their teachers' success depends on targeted, tailored support. By meeting the developmental needs of new teachers and keeping a laser-sharp focus on the needs of students, New Teacher Center model induction programs change the arc of the new teacher's learning curve.

The successful mentoring of beginning teachers is key and includes a number of factors. The first is exemplary teaching practice. In order to efficaciously coach new teachers though the maze of standards, benchmarks, pedagogies, planning lessons, and student assessment, mentors draw upon their own experiences as effective classroom instructors. They are able to quickly guide new teachers toward best practices, making sure there is sanctioned time to ask questions that allow new teachers to discover what is working in their classrooms as well as identifying and facing the challenges. This issue of *Reflections* examines effective mentor strategies, how they impact a new teacher's practice, and most importantly, their students' growth and learning.

A second aspect of a mentor's practice is building relationships within school sites and districts. We hold in high regard the work of school and program leaders in fostering environments that support new teachers and provide positive working conditions. The learning curve of a new teacher is accelerated by connections with many professionals—mentors, principals, peer teachers, content coaches, and other special advisors. Each can make an important contribution to a new teacher's growing expertise. In "Cross-Site Insights: Making Exemplary Teacher Observations Effective," New Teacher Developers Kathleen Aldred, Elizabeth Kurkjian, and Victoria Hom describe the power that observing effective teachers in their classrooms has on the practice of two novice teachers. Laura Gschwend, Kathy Hope, and Laurie Stapleton of the Silicon Valley New Teacher Project, share the power of collaboration for novice teachers in their article, "Integrated Learning Cultures: Leveraging Induction to Impact Teacher Effectiveness and Student Learning."

Focus on student learning and achievement is a third component of our work that informs mentors' interactions with new teachers, and subsequently, new teachers' interactions with students. Across the country, our new teachers are approaching their work with a relentless focus on instructional decision-making that directly

NTC Induction Institute attendees John Andrastek and Paul Hegre confer with Regional Director Sharon Nelson and Ellen Moir.

A Reflection

Looking in the Mirror to Improve Classroom Practice

By Robin Derr, *Durham Public Schools Mentor*

In September 2009, Ms. T., one of my beginning teachers announced, "I need help or I'm going to quit!" She teaches 3rd grade at one of the lowest performing schools in our district with ~86% poverty.

As I met with her, I was impressed when she added, "I need help. I just can't teach this class the way I've taught before. Can you help me figure out how to teach this class?" She never once complained about the students, their parents, or their backgrounds. Her focus was on how to best meet the needs of these students.

We began by using a Collaborative Assessment Log to assess her most pressing concerns. During our conversation, Ms. T. identified a few students who were challenging. Atypical of many new teachers, Ms. T. stayed focused on how she could best meet their needs, rather than what was wrong with the students.

We agreed that I would use the selective scripting tool to collect specific data on these students. When we analyzed the scripts, we were able to classify the data into categories. From there we developed plans for both instructional strategies and behavior management. I shared some resources with her. She immediately went to the media coordinator and asked her to purchase copies of one of the books, The Pre-Referral Intervention Manual by Steven McCarney, for the school's professional library. Shortly thereafter, the school purchased three copies of the book, and she checked one out to help her develop specific strategies to work with the students she had identified as challenging.

In another conversation, Ms. T. wanted to know what she could do to improve student engagement. She wanted to move her students from ritual engagement to authentic engagement. Again, she did not blame the kids but remained focused on improving her teaching. We agreed that I would model a math lesson using some strategies for increasing student engagement.

As I modeled the lesson, Ms. T. took notes on my teaching strategies. After the lesson, I gave her a copy of the lesson plan and we discussed the strategies I used in the lesson. She not only picked up on most of them, but also noticed strategies I didn't even realize I was modeling. We talked about how she could incorporate them into her teaching. During our conversation, her engagement was at a level I rarely see. I could tell she was listening to me and processing the information, but I was not prepared for what happened next. As soon as our meeting ended, she began incorporating some of the strategies into the lesson she taught ten minutes later.

Student engagement changed from ritualistic to authentic. As student engagement increased, we began focusing on the process of learning. We developed strategies for increasing students' thinking. As their thinking deepened, her students' enthusiasm for learning increased. There was a noticeable increase in positive energy in this classroom.

After a couple of weeks, she posed another question: "What else can I do to meet these kids' needs?" I suggested that we look at the students' learning styles. We administered a simple inventory to her students and added the results to her class profile. As we compared the students' grades and learning styles, we discovered that some of the auditory and kinesthetic learners were struggling while her teaching modality was primarily targeting visual learners.

Student Test Scores 2010

Level of Student Proficiency	1st Quarter Math	2nd Quarter Math	1st Quarter Reading	2nd Quarter Reading	1st Quarter Science	2nd Quarter Science
1 *Significantly below grade level*	1	0	6	4	4	1
2 *Below grade level*	7	5	5	5	11	8
3 *At grade level*	12	11	5	7	5	10
4 *Above grade level*	0	3	0	1	0	1
Percent Proficient *at or above grade level*	60	74	28	42	25	55

We discussed ways to modify lessons and differentiate instruction based on her students' learning styles. She considered her students' different needs as she planned lessons and remediated students who had not yet mastered concepts.

At the end of the first quarter, the students took district-administered benchmark exams to assess student achievement in math, reading, and science. Ms T.'s students' scores revealed 60% proficiency in math, 28% proficiency in reading and 25% proficiency in science.

For the next nine weeks, Ms. T. consciously incorporated brain-engaging strategies as she taught her lessons, focused her questioning on improving student thinking and reasoning, analyzed data gathered from formal in informal assessments, and used the assessment data to inform her instruction.

At the end of the 2nd quarter, her students' scores revealed increases of 14% proficiency in both math and reading and a 30% increase in proficiency in science. (See chart) We both saw a correlation between the mentor strategies I used—modeling of lessons, collecting and analyzing student data through classroom observation and learning style surveys, providing resources and ideas, planning conferences, and reflecting conversations on practice—and her more effective teaching. It was truly validating for both of us to see higher student achievement as a result. ■

impacts student learning. This focus on learning and the concomitant habits of mind and practice propel a teacher's ability to achieve amazing results with students. We see examples of this sharp focus in Robin Derr's story, "A Reflection: Looking in the Mirror to improve Classroom Practice," and in "Online Mentoring Helps a New Teacher in an Urban School" we learn how online mentoring made the difference for Cissy Spear and her students. "Measuring the Impact of Mentoring on Student Achievement" by Cynthia Balthasar shares mentor assessment strategies being piloted by the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project. "Full Release and Site Based Mentoring of New Elementary Grade Level Teachers: An Analysis of Changes in Student Achievement" summarizes the findings of NTC Researchers Michael Strong and Stephen Fletcher.

Where does this work ultimately lead? At NTC, we're focused on increased effectiveness of new teachers as measured by teacher practice and student learning, coupled with a heightened policy awareness of the need for high impact induction programs on a national scale. The article, "Measuring Teacher Effectiveness" summarizes the insights of

Terry Holliday, Brad Jupp, and Tom Kane, who served on a panel facilitated by Eric Hirsch at our 2010 National Symposium of Teacher Induction. They explore how to effectively measure teacher effectiveness in the context of policy. We are proud to contribute to this conversation on behalf of our work with mentors, new teachers, and school leaders across this country.

We hope that each article provides insights and perspectives to further the knowledge of what makes an effective teacher and how educators can provide the best support for new teachers to be that effective teacher that every student deserves. ■

Integrated Professional Cultures

Leveraging Induction to Impact Teacher Effectiveness and Student Learning

By Laura Gschwend, *Coordinator of Mentor Professional Development*, Laurie Stapleton, *Coordinator of Participating Teacher Professional Development*, and Kathy Hope, *Program Director, Silicon Valley New Teacher Project*

Professional teaching cultures shape how teachers approach and conduct their work. However, recent research indicates that new teachers continue to work in isolation, are expected to be prematurely expert and independent, and seldom share responsibility with veteran colleagues for student learning (Kardos & Moore Johnson, 2007). Partner districts in the Silicon Valley New Teacher Project (SVNTP) are trying to reverse that trend by providing high quality induction that impacts teacher effectiveness and student learning through many interventions, including development of Integrated Professional Cultures (IPC). Susan Kardos and Susan Moore Johnson define IPC as "frequent and reciprocal interaction among faculty members across experience levels, recognizing new teachers' needs as beginners, and developing shared responsibility among teachers for student achievement and school effectiveness." (Kardos & Moore Johnson, 2007, p. 2083).

In schools and districts with Integrated Professional Cultures (IPC), new and veteran teachers share responsibility for their school, student learning, and each other's professional growth. By replacing typical veteran vs. novice silos of practice with structured, collaborative interactions, teachers assume responsibility for learning at their schools. Where reciprocal faculty interactions occur across grade level and content area, new teachers find it safe to seek help, and new teacher retention tends to improve (Kardos & Moore Johnson, 2007).

Building Bridges from Induction to IPC

Induction programs are uniquely positioned to foster IPCs in schools and districts. Nearly all of the sixteen districts served by the Silicon Valley New Teacher Project (SVNTP) are developing some sort of IPC, often lead by SVNTP-trained district mentors.

Two of SVNTP's high-need districts are implementing IPCs to improve student learning. With support from Applied Materials Foundation, teams composed of five new and five veteran teachers gather monthly at two school sites to learn and apply the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model of lesson design which purposefully shifts learning from teacher-as-model, to sharing joint responsibility for learning with students. The lesson typically includes a focus lesson, guided interaction, collaborative learning, and independent practice. (Fisher and Frey (2008).

"IPCs are an equalizing factor—we're all novices together," says second year induction candidate, Mehdi Panahi, a science teacher at Overfelt High School. "Collaborating is not one plus one equals two; IPCs add up to more than the sum of the parts. Our department's work this year has resulted in learning and practice opportunities that are opening up great possibilities for all of us." Echoing Mr. Panahi's perspective, science department chairperson Brian Barrientez adds, "We hone our collegial practice by everyone learning together with the same unifying purpose."

The Role of the Mentor

The mentor plays a key role in creating new and veteran teacher learning cultures. To support SVNTP mentors leading IPCs, mentors convene in Forums twice each month to learn how to plan and facilitate collaborative learning communities, using NTC Formative Assessment System tools to integrate professional cultures of new and veteran teachers.

At Overfelt High School and neighboring Linda Vista Elementary School, SVNTP-trained district mentors

New and veteran science teachers Ben Ellison, Felicia Arnold, James Radcliffe, and David Selby collaborate to apply the GRR Lesson Design model.

designed and facilitated learning communities for new and veteran teachers, before gradually releasing facilitation to a new and veteran teacher at each site. In this way, induction is integrated ito the professional development of all teachers, which, according to Overfelt principal Vito Chiala, enhances new teacher induction into department or grade-level instructional efforts. In addition, says Mr. Chiala, "established collaboration periods increase motivation and accountability as teachers feel like their professional development is part of the school vision."

At Linda Vista Elementary School in Alum Rock Union School District (ARUSD), SVNTP mentor Joanne Yinger guides new and veteran teachers in re-designing a packaged curriculum into Gradual Release lessons. "As soon as we began our IPC at Linda Vista, I envisioned this model being replicated around our district," said Mrs. O'Maley, Coordinator of Academic Services. Through SVNTP's focus on integrating the induction experiences of new teachers with the professional development of veteran teachers and administrators, Mrs. O'Maley believes "we can improve the conversations of all stakeholders about teaching and learning in our classrooms."

Vito Chiala, principal at Overfelt High School, Mehdi Panahi, science teacher at Overfelt High School, Lynda Cannon Greene, Applied Materials Foundation, and Brian Barrientez, science department chairperson at Overfelt High School

Induction, IPCs, and Student Results

Douglas Reeves (2008) found that at the school level, when only a few teachers implemented an effective practice, there was little impact on student learning. However, when 90% of the teachers implemented the same practice, a high percentage of students scored at the proficient level. Therefore, IPCs that develop common language and practices around instruction are more likely to impact achievement than in schools where induction is not aligned with district professional development initiatives. We are looking forward to SVNTP IPC data of impact, specifically student achievement toward the end of 2010.

In SVNTP, mentors are at the forefront in building shared responsibility for student learning across the new-veteran teacher divide. Induction mentors use FAS

New and veteran teachers learning together in collaborative, job embedded, data driven IPCs, are best positioned to meet the needs of diverse learners.

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processes and tools to nurture a culture of teacher learning that far outlasts beginning teachers' induction. New and veteran teachers learning together in collaborative, job embedded, data driven IPCs, are best positioned to meet the needs of diverse learners.

IPCs expand the work of SVNTP mentors beyond one-on-one mentoring. By taking the best of what induction has to offer, mentors who lead IPCs find themselves in the role of change agent making an important and systemic reform that nourishes high quality teaching in participating schools.

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Full-Release and Site-Based Mentoring of New Elementary Grade Teachers

An Analysis of Changes in Student Achievement

Stephen H. Fletcher and Michael A. Strong, *Researchers, University of California, Santa Cruz*

Induction support for new teachers is widespread, particularly in the form of mentoring, but research evidence of effectiveness is limited. The majority of existing research has focused on the impact of induction on teacher retention. Of greater interest is the potential impact on student achievement, and on which forms of support are the most effective. One frequently encountered option is between full-release or site-based mentors. This study examines these two mentoring options employed in one large urban district. While mentors received the same training, they differed in caseload and release time. A comparison of student achievement gains for classes taught by fourth and fifth grade new teachers, some of whom were supported by full-release mentors and some by site-based mentors, showed greater gains for classes of teachers in the full-release group, even though the demographic characteristics of the students would have led to the opposite prediction.

A large urban school district wanted to improve the support of new teachers by using a mentoring model. The district, though, did not have sufficient resources to have all mentors released from full time classroom duty. The district chose to have some teachers work as mentors full time (full-release) and others work as mentors within their own schools in addition to their own teaching schedule (site-based). The caseload for full-release mentors was 12–15 new teachers and one or two teachers for site-based mentors. The variation in mentor assignment provided the district with an opportunity to look at how release time and caseload differences may be related to changes in class level student achievement.

The study focused on teachers who taught fourth and fifth grades in 2006–2007. The district provided spring 2006 and spring 2007 achievement data on all students taught by the new teachers.

The study used the results of the state-testing program. The assessments were developed to monitor students' learning with respect to the state's curriculum standards. For spring 2006 and spring 2007, English Language Arts and mathematics assessments were administered in grades 3–8 and 10, science and technology were administered in grades 5 and 8, and history and social science was

> In the present climate of education in this country, where some kind of induction support is widely considered to be necessary for new teachers, there is a pressing need to learn which forms of support are the most effective.

administered in grades 5, 7 and high school. As we were interested in the change of student achievement across consecutive years, we chose to focus on English Language Arts and mathematics.

As student characteristics can account for differences in learning, it is important to look at similarities and differences in students taught by the new teachers supported by the two types of mentors. The results of our analysis indicate that, from student characteristics alone, achievement gains of students taught by site-based

mentors should exceed the gains of students taught by full-release mentors.

In the present climate of education in this country, where some kind of induction support is widely considered to be necessary for new teachers, there is a pressing need to learn which forms of support are the most effective. In particular, educators and policymakers are interested in programs that may have an impact on student learning. Much of the existing research on mentoring and induction focuses on possible connections with teacher retention, less on any relationship to student achievement. Existing research presents us with mixed findings, even regarding the effects of differing amounts of time spent with a mentor.

The purpose of the present study was to look at whether different forms of mentoring (as defined by whether the mentors were fully released from teaching or worked on-site while retaining a full teaching load) may be related to changes in student achievement. We found that whether we focus on fourth or fifth grade, or English language arts or mathematics, students associated with full-release mentors had better achievement gains than students associated with site-based mentors.

Measuring the Impact of Mentoring on Student Achievement

By Cynthia Balthaser, *Program Director, Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley New Teacher Project*

In education, we know that ongoing mentoring makes a difference for teachers and students. We experience it in our daily work with teachers as they grapple with challenges and celebrate successes. We have testimonies and quantitative data that attribute teacher efficacy and retention of teachers to mentoring. How can we take measuring the impact of mentoring one step further and measure its impact on student learning, growth and achievement? As part of their own professional development, the Santa Cruz mentors in the Santa Cruz/ Silicon Valley New Teacher Project are investigating this question through a collaborative Inquiry Action Plan.

Educators from Scotland learn about the Cycle of Inquiry—Mentoring Impact on Student Achievement from Santa Cruz and Silicon Valley NTP mentors.

Entering into this inquiry has been like exploring a forest in the dark or working our way through a maze. We have followed paths that have not led us to our goal and yet, along the way we have made some surprising discoveries.

We chose to investigate the impact of mentoring on student learning for a variety of reasons. We mentor teachers with the ultimate goal of impacting student learning. It is critical that we assess our success in reaching this goal. Mentors, when working one-on-one with classroom teachers, have direct access to authentic student work. As opposed to measuring student achievement on a yearly standardized test, mentors and teachers can analyze student growth on specific learning outcomes connected to instruction. Finally, mentors collect a tremendous amount of data. In addition to using a wide variety of formative assessment tools with teachers, mentors record every dialogue with teachers on a Collaborative Assessment Log (CAL).

We began our inquiry by directly asking teachers *"What impact has our work together (mentoring) had on student learning?"* Mentors recorded responses on the weekly Collaborative Assessment Logs, which we collected in a database. We also gathered impact statements from the teachers' mid-year reflections. Analysis of the data revealed a wealth of qualitative, anecdotal evidence, such as the following statement from a fourth grade teacher: *"My mentor supported me in integrating the gradual release model to increase students' participation and performance. When I integrate the strategies, it seems to increase students' writing proficiency."*

While new teacher reflections provided valuable data, mentors reported feeling awkward about asking teachers about the impact of mentoring, because it shifted the focus from the teacher to the mentor. We revised our question in three ways. First, we realized we had left the teacher out of the equation.
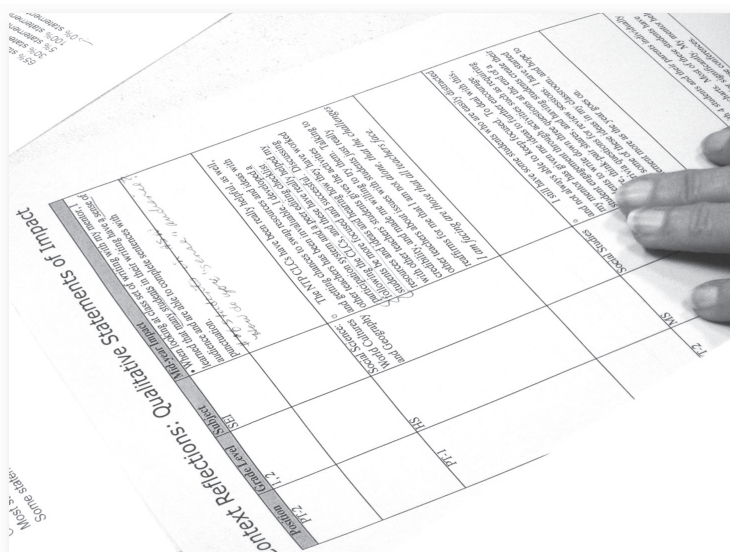
Mentors use this tool to record data of impact.

The results of this study are interesting because the changes we observed in student achievement do not follow predictions indicated by the extant research literature, given the characteristics of the students and with all other things being equal. While we may reasonably hypothesize that the results are due to the different levels of intensity of mentoring, it is also possible that they may be accounted for by cross-school differences, or some other unknown factors.

Although the present results should be interpreted with caution, we look for further work to be done, which, if the findings are similar, will add robustness to the findings presented here.

The study also illustrates the value of gradually implementing a program. The district in this study chose to try site-based and full-release mentor models in order to maximize their financial resources. The result was that district leaders learned how to support full-release mentors as well as site-based mentors. Therefore, if the district's financial situation changed, either model could be expanded or contracted. In this way, staged implementation allows policy makers to collect data on program effectiveness. Staged implementation also gives district leaders a way to learn how to incorporate a new program into existing operations. Thus, this study is an illustration of an alternative method of implementing new programs, which may be useful to school districts.

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Second, we were starting from the wrong direction. We decided to flip the question and ask about student learning first. Our question regarding the impact of mentoring on student learning came down to three questions:

1. What **achievement, growth or learning** have your students made? What is your evidence?

2. What **instructional decisions** did you make that affected this achievement?

3. What **impact** did your work with your mentor have on your instructional decisions?

At this point, we saw an opportunity to delve more deeply into the data and support teachers in re-defining it quantitatively. Teachers' perceptions shifted when they were asked to define qualitative statements such as "most students," "much improved," "students are really getting a sense of" and "doing much better." One teacher reported that most of his students passed the high school proficiency exam. When the mentor asked to look at the data, they discovered that in reality, only 25% of the students had passed. In that critical moment, the mentoring conversation shifted from celebrating success to differentiating instruction.

This statement from a first grade teacher is typical of some responses we received: *"More than 75% of my students improved their reading fluency using the partner reading strategy as evidenced by comparing pre and post-assessments. The students made this progress/growth as a result of my decision to reinforce effort and provide recognition, provide cooperative learning opportunities, model reading strategies, differentiated instruction by strategic partnering, and preview/review key vocabulary and challenging words. The students made this progress as a result of my mentor sharing resources with me, lesson planning with me, analyzing student work, observing me teach and providing feedback, problem solving with me, providing the opportunity for me to observe another teacher and debriefing with me."*

Clearly, it is difficult to assess a one to one correspondence among mentoring, teacher efficacy and student learning. Measuring the impact of mentoring is like measuring the impact of respect. It is complex, non-linear and an inter-connection of many mentoring actions.

Santa Cruz mentors are mid-way through the Inquiry Action Plan. In the spring, we will be looking for quantitative evidence of impact of mentoring on student achievement in the teachers' Inquiry Action Plans. One thing has become clear: as a result of our inquiry, mentoring has shifted from focusing primarily on teacher efficacy to student learning. When we focus on student growth, we continue to build teacher effectiveness. Our mentor-teacher conversations have become more rigorous as we probe for measurable quantitative evidence of student learning.

Though we have not yet completed our inquiry and determined clear findings, an interesting phenomenon has occurred as we seek to measure the effect of mentoring on student achievement. We are discovering that by asking questions about the impact of mentoring, we are positively impacting mentoring. ∎

Online Mentoring Helps a New Teacher in an Urban School

Karen Ackland, *NTC Staff Writer*

Cissy Spear, an 8th grade math teacher at North Middle School in Brockton, Massachusetts, didn't plan on working in an urban school. She was apprehensive about classroom management in an urban school. Because she started teaching after raising her family, she also wondered if she'd be perceived as too old. After earning her Initial Teaching License through the TEACH! Urban South program at the University of Massachusetts[1], Cissy signed up to participate in the NTC *electronic Mentoring for Student Success* (eMSS) program.

Electronic Mentoring for Student Success

eMSS supports the development and retention of beginning science, math, and special education teachers through content-specific online mentoring that promotes student achievement. Beginning teachers are matched with a mentor who has experience teaching the same discipline and grade level. In addition to the one-on-one mentoring, beginning teachers also share ideas and techniques with other beginning and veteran teachers as well as university scientists, mathematicians, and special educators in a nationwide online network.

Anytime. Anywhere.

Cissy was assigned to work with Deanna Reynolds, an award winning math teacher from North Dakota who has taught for twenty-two years. Both Deanna and Cissy liked being able to log in to the online environment and work anytime. "Deanna has been there for me every step of the way," said Cissy. "Our online conversations have bolstered my confidence as a teacher and given me tools that I use everyday." "Cissy is a super-star mentee," said Deanna. "She loves the support and as she's grown as a teacher, she's reached out to help others."

Have you tried this?

Cissy logs on to the eMSS environment almost every day and is an active participant in the community. "I find eMSS invaluable," said Cissy. "There are so many resources and great ideas that I feel like a kid in a candy store. I'm always learning." Recently she posted a question about ways to engage her middle school students. Later in the day she received a number of suggestions that addressed student engagement and conflict resolution. One colleague suggested using a timer at the beginning of class and make a contest out of getting them to settle down. The record was 31 seconds. Now the kids monitor each other. Cissy has also incorporated math tidbits that a facilitator posted to help focus her warm-ups.

Navigating an urban school

Cissy hesitated before accepting the position in Brockton. She'd worked previously as an aide in a vocational high school in the suburbs but immediately noticed a huge difference in the students, their parents, clothes, and language in North Junior High. "Thanks to eMSS, I don't feel isolated," said Cissy. "I know from the online community many other teachers are teaching in similar environments."

Cissy Spear, Brockton Public Schools, Massachusetts

In Cissy's case, confidence building goes two ways. The demographics of the student body at North Middle School is over 70% minority, but the majority of the teachers are white. "As a woman of color, I think it's important for these kids to see an African American woman in a professional job," said Cissy. "I'm proud for the chance to serve as a role model."

Mrs. Spear is proper

Although teaching in an urban environment wasn't her first choice, now Cissy can't imagine being anywhere else. "I'm not one of the "cool teachers," Cissy said. "My students all know that 'Mrs. Spear is proper.'" She may be proper, but her students know that she works hard to keep them engaged. Thanks to the online support she receives from eMSS, she knows she can find the tools and community to continue to challenge her students. "This is my career, and I've having a blast," said Cissy. "They're a hard group of kids, but I'm not writing any of them off. I believe most of them are going to make it. I hope so." ∎

[1] TEACH! is an alternative teacher preparation program that guides participants toward earning Massachusetts initial licensure to teach middle or high school math or science in an urban school district.

Cross-Site Insights

Making Exemplary Teacher Observations Effective

Sophie

By Kathleen Aldred, *New Teacher Developer, Boston Public Schools*

Sophie was a new World Languages teacher who, while initially embarking upon an occupation in the travel industry, was excited about a new career teaching in the Boston Public Schools. Sophie was assigned to a small urban high school to teach Spanish I and II to juniors and seniors. She had a mix of non-Spanish and Heritage (students whose first language is not English) speakers and was the only language teacher on the faculty.

Sophie was assigned to me in September of 2008. As a New Teacher Developer in the Boston Public Schools, I had worked with teachers across many disciplines, but never World Languages (WL). Easily accessible state frameworks and district standards became a starting point for me.

The next week I observed in two of Sophie's classes. She took a very traditional approach to teaching. Greetings, instruction, and directions were all in English. Students completed many reading and writing activities from the textbook. She asked questions in English, and the students were expected to answer in Spanish. The Heritage speakers answered most of the questions and their classmates looked to them for direction. Sophie's students were diligent in completing exercises, but engagement was not high.

As I got to know Sophie better, I learned that she had grown up in Europe. Her first language was French, her second Spanish. English was her third language, which she spoke flawlessly. She taught her classes pretty much the way she had learned in school: the lecture method with little input from students.

Anxious to help Sophie make her Spanish classes more engaging, I visited the classroom of another World Languages teacher, who was highly thought of by the WL Department in the district. I observed that all instruction took place in Spanish, that students responded in Spanish, even in a Spanish One class. The class was mainly oral, with much less time devoted to reading and writing than in Sophie's. I was excited and suggested that Sophie introduce more oral language into her teaching, but she felt that because she

Clockwise from left: Victoria Hom, Kathleen Aldred, and Elizabeth Kurkjian-Henry

move to a different classroom for each class, she could manage the situation better if her students were held accountable for reading passages and answering questions in writing.

In January of 2009, two things happened that encouraged Sophie to change her approach. The district supports a practice called 'cross-site visits' where new teachers get together in small groups and observe in the classrooms of exemplary teachers, coordinated by a New Teacher Developer. Also, in Sophie's case, she would be getting a new group of students at the end of January as her school is on the semester system.

She would also be teaching in only two side-by-side classrooms, so there was less traveling and more wall space available.

Sophie, two other first-year World Language teachers, and I visited the classrooms of two exemplary veteran teachers in early January. These classes were taught entirely in Spanish, and the students spoke solely in Spanish. Sophie took note of this immediately and asked many questions of the teachers as we met with them after the lessons. This day proved to be a turning point in Sophie's practice. During a lunch debrief , Sophie was very excited and set a goal to begin the new semester by requiring students to speak only in Spanish. She planned and executed anchor charts with sentence stems and simple requests. One of the teachers promised to share ideas and strategies with her, and they set up an email system. The other teacher also shared a full binder of oral language activities as well as anchor charts. Together they discussed strategies and set goals. One other teacher bonded with Sophie and they decided to jointly implement ten oral language activities, each in their own classroom, and reflect jointly on the outcomes. Both teachers remained in close contact for

Two Cases: Sophie & Eva

Eva

By Elizabeth Kurkjian-Henry, *New Teacher Developer* & Victoria Hom, *Senior Program Manager, New Teacher Development Program*

"I just wish I could see someone do this well," lamented Eva, one of my new teachers, last fall. Eva had been assigned a 6th, 7th and 8th grade English as a Second Language (ESL) class and English/Language Arts classes for English Language Learners at one of the most needy schools in the Boston Public Schools. It was her first time in her own classroom as a Teach For America corps member. Eva was of Puerto Rican descent and knew Spanish fairly well. But she was struggling. The students were viewing 23 year-old Eva as their friend, older sister, cute aunty— everything except *maestra*. She had no connections to an experienced on-site ESL teacher and wanted desperately to observe a top-notch middle school teacher of students whose first language is Spanish. Eva needed to observe teaching strategies and ways to demonstrate respect for her students' diverse cultures (Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras and Colombia), while implementing consistent classroom management. She needed to see an ESL classroom that worked well with a teacher who would make transparent teaching practices that Eva could try.

I put out a call to my full-time New Teacher Developer (full-release mentor) colleagues: Did anyone know of such a teacher in any of their schools? Emily, a co-worker, suggested Nina, who taught Grade 6 ESL at a nearby middle school with a similar student population as Eva's.

Since the inception of our district's mentoring program in 2006, we have arranged for cross-site visits each February and March. Emily and I were not sure how Nina would feel about welcoming two new ESL teachers (one of Emily's new teachers, Deborah, also had expressed an interest in observing) so early in the year. But Nina was willing, almost excited, about the visit. What we observed that day impressed or—more accurately—blew away our new teachers, and left Emily and me awe-struck. Nina's students were respected and respectful, there was a constant "work buzz" in the room, and transitions were seamless. What struck us most was how invested in learning everyone— students, paraprofessional and teacher—seemed to be, and how *happy* they were to be so invested. This was not a classroom so much as a learning community.

Each year, new teachers are offered the opportunity for cross-site visits. Over the last three years, approximately 300 new teachers have participated in these visits, which have allowed them not only to observe the practice of exemplary teachers, but also to gain strategies, resources, and tools, plus the chance to network with other teachers in the district.

Feedback has been extremely positive. In 2008– 2009, 94% of our survey respondents reported that the experience of the exemplary teacher cross-site visits was helpful to their instructional practice. One teacher shared, "These visits were a wonderful opportunity… I am so grateful for this initiative, and I found that it helped me identify both what I am doing well and what I need to work on in my own classroom." At the same time, we detected a trend: teachers were asking for better subject and grade-level matches as well as visits earlier in the year. Some said, "I loved it, I just wish it had been earlier in the year" or "I have no suggestions except [to] keep providing opportunities for folks in the district to do this more often." As a result, in addition to the larger-scale visits that take place in February and March, we opened up the opportunity for earlier, less formal visits.

We have learned that there are certainly benefits to either approach. With our traditional process, a greater number of new teachers are able to participate, have opportunities to meet with and network with more peers, and if they are not with a group led by their New Teacher Developer, benefit from different perspectives and styles of other New Teacher Developers. On the other hand, a more organic, rolling-basis approach frees us from a "one size fits all" paradigm and allows for a timelier meeting of the new teacher's needs. Indeed, if you see the need in your new teacher, act on it. Have that list of exemplary teachers ready. Establish relationships beforehand. Ask if they are willing to invite a new teacher in to observe.

Now Eva, Deborah and Nina have an ongoing relationship. As Deborah and Nina teach in the same school, Deborah feels free to drop in to observe Nina, take notes, and learn whenever she can. Eva and Nina, who work in different schools, have a strong mentor/mentee relationship and have met several times during days off. Eva feels comfortable emailing or phoning Nina and values her perspective and suggestions. As her New Teacher Developer, I have seen Eva try out routines and strategies that she has observed in Nina's classroom and heard her say, "Yes, I can!" as she successfully implements them. What began as a one-time observation has evolved into a valuable relationship. ∎

Measuring Teacher Effectiveness

Symposium Panel

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is shifting policy discussion from a focus on teacher qualification to effectiveness. Moreover, the dialogue is honing in on a single question: *How can we measure teacher effectiveness in a systematic way*? At the 12th National New Teacher Center (NTC) Symposium, NTC Director of Special Projects Eric Hirsch facilitated a keynote panel discussion with three expert witnesses. Terry Holliday, Commissioner of Education, Kentucky Department of Education; Brad Jupp, Senior Program Advisor to Teacher Effectiveness and Quality, United States Department of Education; and Tom Kane, Professor of Education and Economics, Director of *Project for Policy Innovation in Education* at Harvard University and Deputy Director of Education for the U.S. Program of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation offered ideas from three distinct vantage points on conceptualizing teacher effectiveness and the implications for new teacher and principal support.

To begin, Hirsch provided an overview of the shifting opinions among educators and the audience on how best to ascertain teacher effectiveness. (See graphs of participant responses.)

Hirsch reminded us that for mentoring to have maximum impact, it must take place in schools with supportive leaders who develop a culture of trust,

empower educators, and find time for them to work together. These conditions can be catalysts or constraints. The conversation must extend beyond teacher retention to focus on keeping the right teachers and comprehensively supporting them. Hirsch posed several questions about measuring teacher effectiveness: How do we know who the "right" teachers are? What is an effective teacher? Is it fair to evaluate teacher effectiveness without autonomy, support, and high quality induction?

The panelists offered different ideas on effective measures of teacher effectiveness:

From a research perspective, Tom Kane cautioned that there must be multiple measures of teacher effectiveness, including student gains on state and supplemental tests, videotaped classroom observations of teachers and students, student feedback, teacher scores on tests for pedagogical and content knowledge, and teacher feedback on instructional support they receive. Further, measures should be weighted according to their predictive power in determining student outcomes. He stressed the importance of demonstrating evidence of student achievement gains as essential in assessing effectiveness. Kane shared the importance of using technology such as videos of instruction to create new avenues for feedback—student to teacher, teacher to teacher, teacher to principal and district leaders.

With a lens on state policy, Commissioner Holliday stressed the importance of measuring the support that teachers receive—how effectively principals and systems create conditions for success. Holliday underscored

Race to the Top Definition of Effective Teachers

Under Race to the Top, the U.S. Department of Education defines an effective teacher as one whose students achieve acceptable rates of student growth. States, districts, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth. How strongly do you agree that this correctly defines an effective teacher?

Strongly agree	22
Agree	44
Disagree	11
Strongly disagree	22

(scale: 0 10 20 30 40 50)
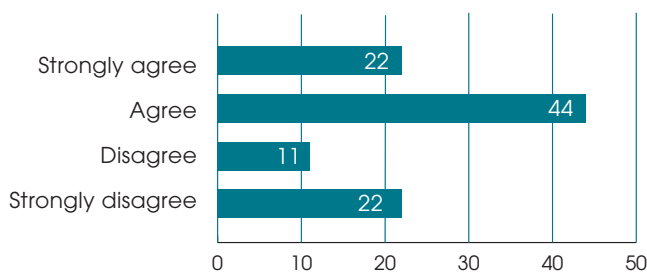
the role of effective principals and suggested a system wherein principals are coached by master teachers and use reliable classroom observation tools to collect data. Holliday complimented the federal DOE's efforts to help educators focus on the "right stuff" through the *Race to the Top* regulations and reminded everyone that teachers must be at the table to find answers to improving instruction.

Speaking from the federal perspective, Brad Jupp explained that *Race to the Top* defines an effective teacher as one whose students achieve acceptable rates of growth on multiple measures. Jupp suggested that teacher pay should be based on accurately measured student growth.. President Obama's goal of increasing the number of successful college-going students is the "right goal," according to Jupp. "It's what parents want for their children."

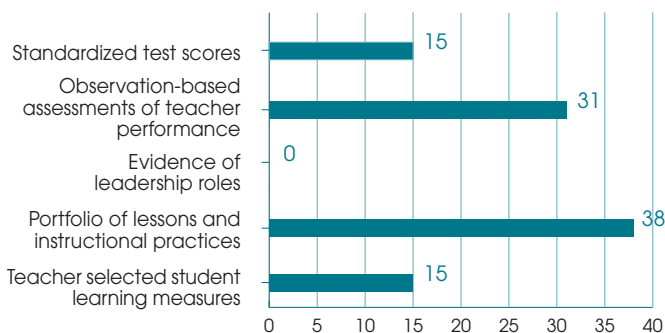He offered concrete actions for educators and policymakers to attain this ambitious goal:

• Sharing good (reliable) data

• Student access to effective teachers and principals
• Emphasis on deep thinking
• Federal government focusing on changing the circumstances in long-term, low performing schools

Jupp mentioned the important role organizations like the NTC play in this because of their ability to scale operations nationally. With the sheer number of schools performing under par, Jupp reasoned that the greatest leverage point for change is the teaching force, and teachers need concerted and targeted support to become effective.

In response to a question about incentives posed by Eric Hirsch, Jupp validated Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's common sense approach: "We need more carrots and fewer sticks. Education has been a victim of top-down mandates for so long, that educators tend to shrug off reform. We have to build ownership for the success of reforms, and inspire strong willed pro-activity."

Which of the following is the BEST measure of teacher effectiveness?

Measure	Value
Standardized test scores	15
Observation-based assessments of teacher performance	31
Evidence of leadership roles	0
Portfolio of lessons and instructional practices	38
Teacher selected student learning measures	15

He mentioned the new grant capacity of Title II funding to focus on teacher and administrator preparation programs.

Hirsch asked about whether an emphasis on assessed subjects such as reading and math may result in a decline of focus on other subjects such as science and the arts. Jupp agreed that we must assess every subject and use effective technology for formative assessment, beginning in areas where we can test and then moving out to other subjects. We can use formative assessment as evidence of growth.

As states submit their Phase II Race to the Top applications and Congress considers ESEA reauthorization, questions still linger about how to measure and evaluate quality teaching. However, the panelists all agreed that induction and mentoring are essential elements in any state strategy to ensure all new teachers have the opportunity to be as effective as they can possibly be. ■

the rest of the school year. With additional support and networking, Sophie was able to achieve the goal of an oral based classroom, something she thought impossible in September.

When I last visited Sophie's classroom, anchor charts and language were displayed on the walls, and I heard the hum of student voices—speaking Spanish!

In place of the endless quizzes and tests that were the hallmark of her first semester, there were student projects everywhere. Students spoke in Spanish with confidence and laughed when they got a verb tense mixed up. Sophie had nicely balanced the four hallmarks of second language learning—speaking, listening, reading and writing—in her teaching. Her students were thriving, and she eagerly looked forward to her second year. Sophie set a second goal for herself for the upcoming school year:

to challenge the Heritage students academically. She would like to offer classes for Heritage speakers because she feels they have unique needs and are ready for greater challenge. She has already presented a proposal to her headmaster. ■

Data Dive

New Teachers in Chicago Public Schools Take the Plunge

By Leslie Baldacci, *Coach, Chicago Public Schools*

Data drives the New Teacher Center's work in Chicago: in coaching relationships, in classrooms, throughout the organization, and across Chicago Public Schools at every level. Here are snapshots of how data is being gathered and used in coaching, teaching and evaluation in Chicago.

How Coaches Use Data

Chicago New Teacher Center has collected and tracked data about its work with first and second-year CPS teachers since its inception in 2006. Coaches log every interaction with new teachers, detailing their work through NTC Formative Assessment System (FAS) and online coaching logs. Electronic logs via Quickbase include dates and lengths of visits, the nature of interactions (observation, conference, working with students, etc.), a narrative description of the visit and FAS tools used.

CNTC's citywide expansion this year added another layer of accountability through upgraded collection and reporting systems grounded in Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Professional Teaching Standards which provide a common foundation for the work of beginning teachers and coaches. The latest Quickbase upgrade classifies coaching visits according to the four domains of Danielson's Framework: planning and preparation, instruction, classroom environment and professional responsibilities. Contributing to increased alignment in the system, CPS is in its second year of piloting the use of Danielson's Framework for teacher evaluations. Finally, CPS is piloting use of Danielson's Framework for Instructional Coaching in evaluations of CNTC coaches this year.

Coaches can manipulate Quickbase data to reveal specific information about their work with teachers. The data inform coaches as to the focus of their work with individual teachers, guide their future work, and provide a picture of their overall performance.

CNTC data document improved retention among new teachers who receive coaching. Now the drive is on to prove a similar link to student achievement. Toward that end, CNTC commissioned the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago to examine the practice of beginning teachers and the work of coaches this year.

Chicago new teacher
Taiesha Woodson-Durham
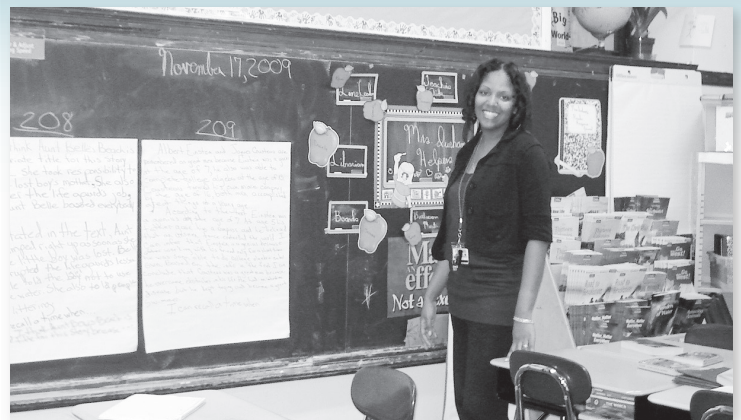
How Teachers Use Data

Today CPS new teachers enter a data-charged environment. They are expected to scrutinize student performance down to individual answers on specific test questions. Especially at lower-achieving schools, where novices are most likely to be hired, the pressure is on to improve student achievement or face probation, reconstitution or even school closing.

Teachers use STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress) and Benchmark Assessment (Fountas & Pinnell) systems to track elementary student progress in reading. Learning First and Scantron testing monitor student progress across the curriculum. Teachers use these assessments to track trends, identify student learning needs and plan instruction. The programs also can be used to generate quizzes, study guides and worksheets.

As informative as the data can be, coaches hear teachers lament that time spent testing means less time for instruction. Many fear losing their jobs if students do not perform well on tests.

Chicago's Data-Driven Leader

When Ron Huberman was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools a year ago, he brought with him the performance management system he honed at his previous job as president of the Chicago Transit Authority. With an MBA from the University of Chicago, Huberman formerly served as Mayor Daley's chief of staff and headed the city's Office of Emergency Management.

Under his watch, "walk-throughs" of recent years have given way to performance management sessions, deep looks into individual schools through the lens of data. These "data dives" probe specific areas of a school's profile: attendance, mobility,

student learning as measured by ISAT scores, and individual classroom performance in reading and math as measured by STEP and Benchmark Assessment data as well as scores from Scantron and Learning First tests.

Sometimes collegial, sometimes punishing, these sessions, led by Chief Area Officers, gather principals from across an Area to focus on the statistical profile of a school, its classrooms and students. Administrators and teachers from the spotlighted school respond to questions and help formulate "next steps."

Tying student data to instruction

The goal of all this assessment and analysis is, of course, improving student learning and achievement. As part of its coaching work this year, Chicago New Teacher Center has offered several study groups focused on the Analyzing Student Work formative assessment tool. Coaches lead small groups of teachers through the process of analyzing work samples and using the data

to identify learning needs, group students and plan for differentiated instruction.

Within the organization, "peer coaching" partners scrutinize logs, tool use and teachers' Individual Learning Plans to help each other advance and focus work with specific individual teachers. This "two heads are better than one" approach has clarified new teacher learning needs, resulting in additional study groups for new teachers, professional development for entire school staffs, site visits and planned observations for teachers and other collaborative activities tied to student learning needs.

As this rigorous data collection and analysis continues at all levels within Chicago Public Schools, CNTC's work is making a difference for students in their classrooms by helping new teachers deliver intentional and targeted instruction every day. ■

Beginning teachers attending a monthly working meeting.

NEW AT NTC

Product and Services Catalog

The New Teacher Center's updated product and services catalog is now available. This comprehensive document includes all NTC professional development, products, and resources available as well as information on surveys, consultation and customization of products. download the new catalog at **www.newteachercenter.org/pdfs/NTC_ProductCatalog.pdf.**

Instructional Mentoring Professional Development Online

Facilitated now as an online course, this three-week professional development workshop provides mentors with foundational knowledge and skills that help them assess and support new teachers' developmental and contextual needs. For more information, visit our website at **www.newteachercenter.org/ti/menu.php?p=iim.**

New Practice Brief *Mentor Assessment and Accountability: Promoting Growth*

The NTC advocates a multi-faceted, growth-oriented system of support and accountability for mentors that includes a range of procedures, tools, and protocols for mentor professional development, supervision, assessment, and accountability. This practice brief offers ideas, suggestions, and possible tools and strategies for assessment for mentor growth and accountability. Download the new practice brief at **www.newteachercenter.org/pdfs/MAA_brief.pdf.**

Save the Date • Thirteenth National
Symposium on Teacher Induction
Pre-Conference: **January 30, 2011**
Symposium: **January 31–February 1, 2011**
Fairmont Hotel, San Jose, California

For more information, visit
www.newteachercenter.org

About the New Teacher Center

The New Teacher Center is a national organization dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders. NTC strengthens school communities through proven mentoring and professional development programs, online learning environments, policy advocacy, and research. Since 1998, the NTC has served over 49,000 teachers and 5,000 mentors, touching millions of students across America.

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